

Preface

At the out set, let me submit my compulsions and convenience in undertaking this academic exercise what I have attempted to make for nearly a decade. Being born and brought up in Cooch Behar, presently the district town of Cooch Behar-the erstwhile capital of the Princely State Cooch Behar, my sense of history did gradually grow in a positive social and academic ambience which helped to develop an insight in me to understand both academically and conceptually the history of our region. The present study has attempted to unravel an unexplored area of Cooch Behar State (1772-1949). The Princely State Cooch Behar occupies an important place in the eyes of the contemporary historians specially dedicated to the cause of regional history. Because of its chequered past and an objective recorded history of continuous 500 years dynastic rule as well as the relevant documentation of records of administration which are available and accessible. The balance of convenience, for me, tilted to concentrate on the study of Cooch Behar especially its land –man relationship.. Indeed the present study is based on regional-national continuum and more precisely would unfold the micro – specificities of history in the regional frame to understand further the macro-specificities of history. The lens used in the study is “National History Localised”.

The history of the State of Cooch Behar triggered an academic intervention of diverse interests. While the central preoccupation of the researchers in the colonial phase was to explore 1) the dynastic history of family, 2) the beneficial economic and administrative reforms undertaken by the State of Cooch Behar under the aegis of the colonial Residents, the central concern of the researchers in the post- colonial phase appeared to be to construct the different shades of interrelationships between the State of Cooch Behar, its neighbouring states and the British India at different points of time.

Until recently, agrarian studies on colonial India have been basically the policy studies. However, the official debates on revenue settlements have provided ample academic space for numerous regional studies. Studies on the structure of agrarian relations in their regional variations, the internal matrix of the economy,

the processes of productions, trends in productivity, rents, prices, land-man relationship, inter alia, have still been relatively scarce. Over the years the focus of analysis has also changed within the policy studies. In addition, what is being realized now that the issues of land alienation, land-control structure, socio-economic de-stabilization, and social dynamics of land-man relationship, impact of prices, market mechanism, and agricultural productivity of the Princely State of Cooch Behar have not been seriously explored by the contemporary wisdom of regional historical research. The proposed study is addressed to the issues mentioned above, hitherto remained unaddressed.

The present study could not have been completed without the ceaseless inspiration and continuous academic support of my supervisor Professor Ananda Gopal Ghosh. In fact he has taught me the basic lesson of history. He has made me to understand the different aspects of the history of our region by his thorough wisdom and deep insight in the subject. I express my gratitude and indebtedness to my research supervisor. I owe to all of my teachers in the Department of History, University of North Bengal. I extend my gratitude to the respective supportive staff and librarians of the State Library, Cooch Behar, North Bengal University Library, State Central library, Kolkata, National Library Kolkata, State Archives Kolkata, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi, National Archives, New Delhi, Indian Institute of Advanced Studies, Simla, for their kind cordial co-operation. Most importantly I owe to my parents and my uncle for their continuous support and encouragement.

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